



MINUTES
NASHUA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
Executive Committee
April 21, 2004

Present: Frank Bolmarcich, Chairman
Kathy Hersh
Bill Parker
Howard Dilworth, Jr.
Nelson Disco
Andy Prolman
Marilyn Peterman
Mike Fimbel

Members Absent: John Eresian, Vice Chair

Others Present: Stephen Williams, Executive Director

The chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Williams stated that there was a conflict on the evening of the May meeting with another meeting in the conference room and asked how the group wanted to handle the issue. Hersh suggested that the meeting be held at Nashua City Hall and the group agreed. Williams agreed to provide directions in the May Executive Committee packet.

Minutes of the February 18, 2004 Non-public Session

Members reviewed the minutes of the February 18, 2004 Non-Public Session. Williams stated that they were taken by Bolmarcich. Motion by Peterman, seconded by Parker to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

Minutes of the March 17, 2004 Executive Committee Meeting

Members reviewed the minutes of the March 17, 2004 meeting of the Executive Committee. Motion by Peterman, seconded by Disco to approve the minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

Agency Status and Future Directions

Williams reviewed the memorandum on Agency Status and Future Directions with the members of the committee. A general discussion of the issues ensued. Among other comments, Parker thought that the initiative to survey members on their priorities and ideas for NRPC would be well received. Hersh expressed concern that the overall purpose for NRPC should include the aspect of working together to improve the region and not just to protect local control. Several members stated that they thought it would be beneficial to provide some version of the memo to the full Commission and to elected officials from around the region. Williams indicated that he would work to amend the memo and bring it back to the Executive Committee prior to taking it to the Commission and the region's elected officials.

Memorandum of Understanding between NRPC and City of Nashua/Nashua Transit System

Williams reviewed the proposed memorandum of understanding. He stated that the memorandum was a federal requirement that described the responsibilities of NRPC and the Nashua Transit System in planning for the region's transit service. Williams indicated that the current memorandum is out of date and that the proposed changes are really just to get it up to date with the current set of federal requirements. Williams also stated that the memorandum did not commit NRPC to anything it was not already doing. Motion by Disco, seconded by Prolman to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. Motion passed.



Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

Williams stated that with the retirement of Moni Sharma, SNHPC's Executive Director, there might exist the opportunity for some closer relationship between NRPC and SNHPC. Williams reviewed the reasons stated in the memorandum that a closer relationship might be beneficial and added that if the two agencies were in some fashion linked it would enable the resulting agency to maintain a more diverse and technically specialized staff. Williams described some examples of other planning commissions with which he was familiar that included more than one metropolitan area. Williams also pointed out that after the 2010 Census that the entire south central New Hampshire area was likely to be one urbanized area and that event would force cooperation at some level on the regions.

There was a general discussion of issues that could arise with regard to such a change. Dilworth expressed concern about further diluting the role of smaller communities if both Nashua and Manchester were in the region. There was a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of being linked with the Manchester region. Members of the committee asked about SNHPC's financial status. Williams stated that it was very strong. Members of the committee agreed that some significant advantages could exist if the two regions were more closely related. Motion by Disco, seconded by Fimbel to explore the possibility of a closer relationship between the two regions. Motion passed. Members of the Executive Committee agreed that Kathy Hersh and Mike Fimbel should work with the Executive Director to explore the idea of a closer relationship with appropriate members of the SNHPC Executive Committee.

Intervenor Status in the City of Nashua Eminent Domain Petition before the Public Utilities Commission

Williams stated city staff had approached him and asked if NRPC would file for full intervenor status to help support and coordinate the activities of the other municipalities who might be involved at the regional level. Members asked if there needed to be approval by the full Commission for such an action. Williams stated that in the Pennichuck - Philadelphia Suburban PUC petition that the Executive Committee approved filing for full intervenor status. Concerns were raised by members of the committee on the role in which this might place NRPC. The members of the committee wanted to make sure that NRPC would not simply act at the direction of the city, but would be serving the interests of the region in participating in the process. Williams stated that his reason for proposing intervenor status was to gain full information on the process and issues so that the agency could be more effective in its role of coordinating and communicating with the members. Peterman stated that she thought NRPC could play a very important role and should file for full intervenor status. There was also concern regarding the amount of work that might result from interrogatories in the course of the process. Williams stated that he wanted to avoid the interrogatory process as much as possible and would depend on information provided by the interrogatories submitted by others. Motion by Dilworth, seconded by Parker to approve filing for full intervenor status. Motion passed.

Commuter Rail Status

Williams reported on the up to date status of the Commuter Rail project and provided copies of a letter he had submitted to the Senate Capital Budget committee. He stated that he had been working closely with city staff to identify revenue neutral methods for the city to move the project forward without NH DOT participation. Williams indicated that he would keep the members of the Executive Committee informed about progress on the issue.

March Finance Report

Williams reported that the agency was in very strong condition financially and could end the year with its cash balance increased by up to \$80,000. He stated that his biggest current concern was actually completing some contracts that ended in June due to the currently reduced staff.



Report on hiring process for Assistant Director/Land Use

Williams reported that 18 applications had been received for the Assistant Director/Land Use position. He stated that it appeared to be a very qualified applicant pool. He also asked the committee to appoint two people to serve on an interview committee with himself and two members of the agency management team. The members of the committee agreed that Bill Parker and John Eresian should be assigned.

FY05 Budget Items

Williams suggested that due to the length of the meeting that discussion of the budget items be put off to the May meeting and that they should have priority at that time. The members of the committee agreed.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

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